

Impact of COVID-19 on Teaching/Learning - Some Innovations

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Abstract: Technology is the way forward in many fields, and education is no exception. With educational institutions closing their doors due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many online windows open to impart education. Hybrid teaching – usage of technology in learning in addition to direct face to face learning will be on the rise. The attitudes of students, parents and teachers also, are more open to online learning. Online and Internet, once synonymous with gaming and “time-pass” are gaining currency with the current generation of parents, who are more in touch with technology. Though technology can never completely replace Teachers, it is Teachers who use technology who will better benefit students as well as society.

Keywords: Innovation in Teaching, Online Teaching, Games, Flipped Class

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has not only changed our way of thinking, it has changed the current way of life. Normal, everyday activities are now forbidden, while new practices are the norms to follow. No field, from economy to entertainment is left untouched. But one area which was turned on its head, but quickly recovered is Education.

It is widely believed that countries' social and economic well-being will depend to an ever greater extent on the quality of their citizens' education: the emergence of the so-called 'knowledge society', the transformation of information and the media, and increasing specialization on the part of organisations all call for high skill profiles and levels of knowledge. Today's education systems are required to be both effective and efficient, or in other words, to reach the goals set for them while making the best use of available resources» (Cornali, 2012).

On-line Teaching/ Learning

Due to globalization, the educational expectations we set for our children is high. We expect our children to be ready for a global life by the time they finish their higher secondary. Now, Covid-19 has forced all schools, private and government alike, to look to online teaching. Some Museums, Zoos, National Parks offer online or virtual tours and safari of their facilities, without charging a fee; this opens up children to a wide variety of experiences, which might not be affordable to them in everyday life. Many world renowned universities, like Harvard, Cambridge, our own MHRD also have been offering many online courses and degrees, some for a nominal fee and some for free... with or without certification, through MOOC.

There are many existing platforms which offer online coaching right from KG till higher education. Many self-paced courses are also offered by private centres, teachers and also by the government. Online platforms like Zoom, YouTube, Webex, Google Class, Google Meet, Edmodo etc, have seen a surge in their usage post March 2020, as they are some of the main applications/ tools used for online teaching/ learning.

For an effective online class/ teaching, a teacher needs to equip themselves to be able to

- Create a lesson plan that will be easily understandable by learners and hold their attention.
- Share a variety of resources with learners in different file formats.
- Communicate with learners in real-time.
- Assign work individually or as a group.
- Assess the learners understanding during the class and make changes in teaching strategies in real-time.
- Evaluate their learning at the end of the unit, provide feedback, for individual learners, and if needed provide additional lessons.

For a teacher to be able to equip themselves to effectively deliver on all the above aspects, a teacher needs technical support, access to a smart phone (in the least, or preferably a desktop or laptop), and knowledge, to competently use online tools, applications, software to extract the maximum benefit. So, the teachers need to be trained first in order to be able to deliver effective online classes.

There are many online tutorials on how to share videos, PowerPoint presentation etc through online platforms. So all that a teacher needs is a thirst to teach, and the ways and means present itself to the seeker.

Innovative Methods of Learning

Immersive Learning: Learning is the acquisition of knowledge. It is not limited to textbooks, classrooms or lectures or even to the young; one can learn even when we are old. Virtual tours of museums or monuments, live Safari, etc are also a kind of learning which is Immersive Learning (albeit virtually). This can

be used as a stepping stone to develop curiosity in a child's mind. History, Geography, Environmental Science, Language... all this can be taught in this method.

Online art and craft videos: One of the main concerns that parents have about today's children is a lack of attention span. We can use the attractiveness of online videos to teach children about waste management, recycling, upcycling, composting etc. Videos should be selected for their content and these videos could be shown to children one activity at a time. When we make a practice of seeing an activity on video and following it up by doing the activity, children learn by doing. They also learn of attitudes and qualities which help them to move beyond a virtual life. They learn to follow instructions, try to improvise and be focussed on the activity or project at hand.

Online Libraries: Children's websites offer animated books, audio books and e-books, some of which may even be downloaded to a device. While some websites offer memberships or subscriptions, many sites, like Amazon, offer e-books free of cost also. These books can be used to improve language skills in learners or even to learn a new language. Bilingual books are very useful, as the same content is in two languages – native language, and target language. With no formal teaching or learning, children have learnt Korean through songs or cartoons, as they are interested in music (listening to bands like BTS) or in anime (cartoon series).

Games: Nearly anything can be taught through games. Children find a healthy outlet for their inexhaustible energy, with the added benefit of learning. Maths, Science, Language, Environmental science, Earth Science etc, can be taught through games. Some of the games which we can use are Role Play, Charades, Catch the Ball (the person who throws the ball, asks a question -to which they know the answer- the person who catches it tells the answer), Word Search, Puzzles, Riddles, Cross words etc. Each of these games can be used to teach language, core subjects, general awareness/ knowledge, environmental awareness/ knowledge, fine motor skills, gross motor skills etc. The most important benefit of using games, in my opinion, is that learners are not bored with learning, they have a sense of accomplishment and they are eager to return to class.

Conclusion

In conclusion, learners and teachers have accepted online teaching/ learning as a way of life for the foreseeable future. We have to understand though that it is not a substitute to direct, face-to-face teaching, but it is a welcome addition. It is to the benefit of the learners that the teaching community and the parent community join hands to provide seamless, continuous, non-tedious education and life skills to the learners, by using all available means.

References:

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